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RETURNS ON FUR FARMING SURVEY COME IN RAPIDLY

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Returns on the first detailed survey of fur farming in the United States are coming in rapidly to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. By the end of November, 2,381 replies had been received to the 20,000 questionnaires sent to all reported fur farmers. The survey is directed by Frank G. Ashbrook of the Biological Survey.

Individual returns are confidential and a summary of the survey will be mailed to those who reply promptly. Wisconsin, Michigan, Utah and Minnesota already have indicated by their replies considerable activity in fur farming.

The survey aims to supplant estimates and guesses with concrete facts on the fur farming industry in this country. The bureau is anxious to uncover trends in fur farming. To what extent the industry is being carried on as a side line to other agricultural enterprises and how closely production is following style demands are two of the questions the survey will answer. Norway and Canada, both large fur producers of silver foxes, already have the statistical background necessary to guide the industry in their countries.

In the United States, fur farming is rapidly becoming an important farm enterprise. The annual income to fur farmers from the sale of pelts is now about \$12,000,000. This represents twenty percent of the total value of furs taken annually in the United States.

The Bureau of Biological Survey estimates 300,000 silver fox and 200,000 mink furs will be sold by fur farmers this year. Other valuable fur bearers produced in the United States include martens, fishers, wolverines, otters and

karakul sheep. The industry is all the more significant, Ashbrook points out, because it does not compete with any other kind of farming and utilizes land that is of little or no value for any other crop.

The completed survey is expected to serve breeders, State conservation commissions and agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission and the Tariff Commission. The Biological Survey intends to use the information as a guide for research programs.